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JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

BRIEFS

HAWKINS, WIFE MISS ATTACK BY MINUTES

FT. LAUDERDALE, FL (BP) — O.S. Hawkins, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's GuideStone agency in Dallas, and his wife Susie narrowly missed getting caught up in the Jan. 8 shooting spree that claimed five lives at the Ft. Lauderdale, FL, airport. Hawkins, on his way to preach at his former pastorate at First Church, Ft. Lauderdale, tweeted, "Multiple dead in FLL airport shooting thirty minutes after Susie and I passed thru baggage claim." Ohio pastor Greg Jackson tweeted, "God has you right where you need to be to minister to the people of Ft. Lauderdale this weekend."

KY. SALONS TAKING UP PRO-LIFE ISSUES

FRANKFORT, Ky. (BP) — Republicans in the Kentucky House of Representatives are moving ahead with a number of pro-life proposals, among them legislation that would require women to undergo ultrasounds before having abortions, after voters in November of last year elected a super majority of pro-life Republicans and paved the way for passage of legislation that had languished while the House was under Democratic control. On the opposite end of the state capital, the Senate overwhelmingly approved a proposal that would ban abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy.

SO. BAPTISTS LEAD PRAYER CAUCUS

WASHINGTON (BP) — Another Southern Baptist has stepped up to provide leadership for the Congressional Prayer Caucus. Rep. Mark Walker, R-N.C., will be the new House of Representatives co-chairman of the caucus. It was announced Jan. 9. Sen. James Lankford, R-OK, the other co-chairman of the prayer caucus, and former Rep. Randy Forbes, R-Va., who founded the caucus in 2005 and was defeated in his latest reelection, were in the announcement. All three are members of Southern Baptist churches. The caucus counted 90 members in the last session of Congress.

Christians dominate U.S. Congress

Numbers decreasing, however

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — The U.S. Congress has remained majority Christian and Protestant as long as the Pew Research Center has been tracking data — but both numbers have fallen in recent years.

Since Pew began tracking religion in 1961 during the 87th Congress, the body has declined from 95% to 91% Christian. Protestants, while still maintaining a majority, have declined from 75% in 1961 to 56% today, Pew announced.

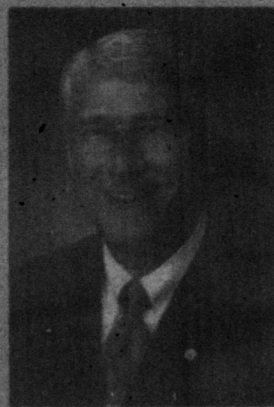
On its web site, Pew Research Center is described as a "nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping America and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis, and other empirical social science research. Pew Research Center does not take policy positions. It is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts."

Of the 485 Christians in the 535-member Congress, 299 are Protestant, according to Pew's analysis of the 115th Congress that was sworn in on Jan. 3. In 1961, Protestants numbered 401.

MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS IN CONGRESS



SEN. THAD COCHRAN



SEN. ROGER WICKER



REP. GREGG HARPER

"Like the nation as a whole, Congress has become much less Protestant over time," Pew wrote in its report titled, Faith on the Hill: The religious composition of the 115th Congress. However, the percentage of Protestants in Congress still outpaces the 48 % of Protestant adults in the U.S., Pew said in its report drawn from CQ Roll Call data.

"The group that is most notably underrepresented is the religiously unaffiliated," Pew wrote in its press release announcing the data. "This group

also known as religious 'nones' — now accounts for 23% of the general public but just 0.2% of Congress."

The 72 Baptist Congressional members comprise 13.5% of the body, trailing the 15% of U.S. adults that are Baptist as well as the 14.8% of Baptists in the 114th Congress of 2015-2016.

Catholics comprise 31.4% of the body (168), compared to the 21% of Catholic adults in the nation. Other religious groups in Congress are Jewish members at 5.6% (30), Mormon at

2.4% (13), and other religions affiliations less prevalent in the U.S., including Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, Orthodox Christian, Unitarian Universalists and others. About two percent of members, a total of 10, did not specify a faith.

Christians make up the majority of Republicans and Democrats in Congress, Pew said, with 99% of Republicans and 80% of Democrats identifying as Christian. While 67% of Republicans are Protestant and 27% are Catholic, Democrats

see CONGRESS on p. 6

Obama mandate blocked by judge

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — A federal judge has blocked implementation of a controversial Obama administration rule that would force doctors to perform abortions and gender transition procedures.

In a Dec. 31 opinion, Judge Reed O'Connor of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas, an appointee of former U.S. President George W. Bush, granted a nationwide preliminary injunction against a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulation that mandates the performance of and insurance coverage for gender transitions — even on children — and abortions, even if they violate the religious or ethical beliefs of the physicians and others involved.

The mandate was scheduled to go into full effect Jan. 1. Religious freedom advocates applauded O'Connor's decision.

"This ruling is a commonsense decision that is a victory for all who believe that children should not be pawns of the state and that the political ideology of the day should not supplant the consciences of doctors," said Travis Wussow, vice president for public policy and general counsel at the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville.

"I am thankful for Judge O'Connor's intervention and pray that our federal government would stop its needless assault on the conscience," Wussow said in written comments for Baptist Press.

Lori Windham, senior counsel for Becket Law (formerly the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty), described O'Connor's ruling as "an across-the-board victory."

"The government has no business forcing private doctors to perform procedures on children that the government itself recognizes can be harmful and exempts its own doctors from performing," Windham said in a written statement. "The ruling ensures that doctors' best medical judgment will not be replaced with political agendas and bureaucratic interference."

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) — the country's largest LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender)

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see MANDATE on p. 7



From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Mississippi Baptists to the rescue — again

A veteran of three cardiac bypasses and seven stents, I was well aware of what was happening to me at 2:30 a.m. on Christmas morning. As the searing, butcher-knife-in-the-chest pain awakened me and began to radiate down the inside of my left arm, I knew I had to get help — and fast.

So it was that I landed in the emergency room at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson. They may not have known I was coming, but they were ready just the same. Literally within minutes of my arrival, a nurse was inserting an IV line in my right arm and a doctor was standing at the foot of the examining table, asking pointed questions about the location and intensity of the pain and reviewing my heart history with me.

I was quickly assessed and stabilized by the E.R. crew, and shipped to the cardiac observation unit within steps of the emergency room. There, specialized nurses took over my care and were at my bedside when the second round of agony began. The symptoms were the same, only worse, and bad enough that I began praying about what I thought could well have been my impending arrival in Heaven as a saved follower of Jesus Christ. I was hurting, but I was at peace.

In the throes of that second round of agonizing pain, my cardiologist arrived in the room with the results of the blood tests taken in the E.R. Providentially, he was already at the medical center and prepared to immediately start a heart catheterization. I was swiftly wheeled into the cath lab and prepped by two nurses who were already gowned and gloved and waiting on me.

Within minutes, I was ready. My cardiologist inserted the catheter into the femoral artery of my right leg and headed straight to my heart. The relief was immediate. He completed the procedure and reported the effort had been successful in unblocking one of my original bypasses from 2010 that was 98% occluded. It was, as he termed it, unexpected stenosis.

What followed were two days as the only patient in the cardiac intensive care unit. Even though it

must have surely been expensive, the medical center called in specialized nurses to take shifts caring of me. They stood over me for hours as I coughed and hacked my way through a sinus infection I already had when I arrived at the hospital, intervening with medication to ensure the infection didn't migrate to my chest and cause a bronchial problem or worse, pneumonia.

After an additional day in a private room while the sinus infection dissipated and my heart worked its way back up to normal operational levels, I was discharged and headed to home sweet home.

I'm back at my desk in the Baptist Building today, writing this commentary and feeling better than ever thanks to the blood flow that has been fully restored to an important part of my heart. A generation ago, the outcome may have been very different. Two generations ago, the outcome would probably have been certain.

Each day since the emergency as I have thanked God for taking care of my eternal life, I have also thanked Him for taking care of my earthly life one more time. I'm grateful that He isn't finished with me yet.

I am also grateful to Him beyond measure for the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center and its people, so dedicated as they have been to saving my life more than once. I am also grateful beyond measure to Mississippi Baptists, who faithfully followed the Lord's direction in setting up and supporting all the Christian ministries with which He has blessed us — 2,100 unified local churches, education ministries that include a law school and medical school, children's ministries that include the Baptist Children's Village, Baptist Student Unions that touch students from around the globe, campgrounds that generate hundreds of professions of faith each year, and disaster relief ministries, to name just a few.

Only when we get to Heaven will we be able to grasp the magnitude of the impact all these ministries have had in accomplishing the Great Commission but for right now, I'll be thankful for everything I see around me. Where Mississippi Baptists are concerned, that's pretty huge.

Pill for this, pill for that

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, we see references to witchcraft. Galatians 5:20 and Revelation 21:8 are a couple of examples.

The shock for most folks is to learn that the word witchcraft (or sorcery, in some translations) is actually the Greek word *pharmakeia*. Sound a little familiar? That's because it's the same word from which we get our word pharmacy.

Why bring this up? Because nowadays, there seems to be a pill for everything and plenty of encouragement to try them all. Because of this attitude of "a pill will fix it," senior adults — including well-intended Christians — are being overmedicated with painkillers, antidepressants, and other mind- and behavior-altering drugs at an increasing rate.

We think of drug addiction as a problem among young people. While most senior adults aren't out on the street trying to get a hit from their local dealer, what they are doing is getting a slew of prescription drugs from their doctors. Here are just a few eye-opening statistics:

■ DrugAbuse.gov says that while people age 65 and older make up only 13% of the population, they account for more than one-third of the money spent on outpatient prescriptions in the U.S. Meanwhile, AgingCare.com notes that 40% of all the prescription medications sold in the U.S. is for senior adults.

■ According to the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, up to 17% of senior adults abuse prescription drugs.

■ A USA Today.com article quotes Betty Van Amburgh, a 68-year-old who had become drug-addicted, as saying, "The doctors just kept prescribing them...I was a zombie." Betty went through several back surgeries 20 years earlier and, all these years later, doctors were still keeping her stocked with painkillers.

The same article went on to warn that older patients are being loaded with opioid painkillers and benzodiazepine anxiety drugs, with a 20% increase in opioid prescriptions in the last five years. That's more than double the growth rate of the senior adult population.

So what are we to make of all this? If you need a pill to go to sleep, a pill to wake up, and a pill to keep you going in between, or if you're experiencing fuzzy thinking and difficulty keeping your balance, you may be overmedicating.



Guest opinion

with Judy Woodward Bates

I realize that certain conditions require medication on a regular basis, so please, don't think I'm being critical of those who truly need these drugs. My concern is for those who have been prescribed so much for so long that they're simply not sure what they need or what they can do without.

Many seniors experience falls and dementia-like symptoms simply from being overmedicated. It's so important to keep all your doctors aware of all your medications. Regardless of how many doctors you may have, make sure each of them is provided with a full list of your medications. One doctor unaware of the medication being prescribed by another doctor could easily put you on a drug that's dangerous or even life-threatening when combined with certain other medications.

If you're a caregiver, relative, or close friend of a senior adult you believe is being overmedicated, encourage or even assist him/her in writing down all his/her medications including over-the-counter meds and nutritional supplements of which his/her doctors may not be aware, and in scheduling an appointment to have his medications reevaluated and, hopefully, some dosages reduced or eliminated.

Certainly, let's pray for those who are dealing with this terrible problem — those who are overmedicated and have become drug-addicted — and for those who love them and are trying to help, remembering the instruction of Scripture: "Therefore be clear-minded and sober, so you can pray" (1 Peter 4:7b).

Bates, an author, speaker, and TV personality, is a member of Gardendale First Church in the Birmingham, AL, area. Visit her website, Bargainomics.com, and find her on Twitter and Facebook by searching for Bargainomics. Her commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style.

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House panel: Defund Planned Parenthood

WASHINGTON (BP) — Planned Parenthood should no longer receive federal funds, a special congressional panel has recommended following a nearly 15-month investigation.

The Select Investigative Panel on Infant Lives issued its final report Jan. 3 into the practices of abortion providers and others involved in the fetal tissue procurement business. The report not only called for congressional action to protect unborn children and their mothers, but also recommended restrictions on government grants to abortion providers and research using fetal tissue.

Congress established the panel, which operated under the umbrella of the House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce, in October 2015 after undercover videos allegedly provided evidence Planned Parenthood was trading in body parts from aborted babies.

The secretly recorded videos appeared to show various executives of the country's No. 1 abortion provider discussing the sale of fetal parts, as well as their willingness to manipulate the abortion process to preserve organs for sale and use and to fill orders for specific body parts.

Southern Baptist and other pro-life advocates commended the report. "What the investigative panel discovered is what many of us already knew existed — a predatory industry that exploits women and families," said Steven Harris, director of advocacy for the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville.

"The case studies conducted by the panel reveal years of negligence, cut corners, and non-compliance, and my hope is that the swiftest of action be taken



PROTEST IN OHIO — Supporters of Planned Parenthood stage a protest near the state capital in Columbus, Ohio, where the battle rages on against abortion and the nation's largest abortion provider. Ohio Governor John Kasich recently signed legislation making abortions after 20 weeks illegal in the state. (Source: Flickr/Wikipedia Creative Commons)

regarding the recommendations, and that the abortion industry might at long last be held accountable," Harris told Baptist Press in written comments.

Steven Aden, senior counsel for pro-life Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) in Scottsdale, Az., said of the panel's findings on Planned Parenthood, "Congress should end taxpayer subsidies of an abortion business that has enjoyed nearly a billion dollars in profits over the last decade while taking more than \$4 billion from American taxpayers."

"It's time to end this immoral partnership that has been forced upon the American people."

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) and its affiliates received \$553.7 million in government grants

and reimbursements in its latest financial year, 2014-15. Planned Parenthood's affiliates performed 323,999 abortions during 2013-14, the most recent reporting year for which statistics are available.

Planned Parenthood's receipt of federal funds has long produced opposition from Republicans and support from Democrats. Last January, U.S. President Barack Obama vetoed legislation that would have eliminated about 90% of federal money for PPFA during the year. In mid-December, the Obama administration issued a final rule that effectively blocks states from prohibiting federal family planning funds for Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers.

President-elect Donald Trump has pledged to work to defund PPFA.

In its report, the panel asserted there was evidence some tissue-procurement companies illegally profited from the trade in body parts from aborted babies. One of the procurement firms, StemExpress, increased its revenue from about \$156,000 in 2010 to \$4.5 million in 2014 in its role as a middleman between abortion clinics and researchers, according to the report.

Planned Parenthood denied it made a profit but refused to provide accounting documents to demonstrate its claim, the panel reported.

The report said, "[T]he relationships that have formed between tissue procurement

companies, abortion clinics, and universities are fraught with questionable practices, including the possible use of illegal, late-term abortion practices to procure fetal tissues and organs, violations of federal laws and regulations on patient consent, and systematic violations of patients' HIPAA rights."

The panel listed in the report 15 referrals it made for possible criminal or regulatory violations. In some cases, the referrals were for potential violations of federal or state laws by Planned Parenthood and other abortion clinics. The referrals also included possible illegal profiting from the sale of baby body parts by StemExpress and other tissue-procurement companies.

Among the recommendations in its final report, the panel called for:

- Congress to eliminate grants for Planned Parenthood and certify that such federal funds go to comprehensive health-care providers that do not perform abortions.

- Congress to ban federal funding of research using tissue from aborted babies while instituting a program to support procurement of ethically acquired fetal tissue for research.

- Congress to approve legislation — known as the Pain-capable Unborn Child Protection Act — to safeguard unborn children after 20 weeks gestation.

- The U.S. Department of Justice to increase its commitment to the prosecution of those who profit from the sale of fetal tissue.

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to issue guidelines for emergency care by abortion providers to children born alive during the lethal procedures.

Federal judge singles out N.J. Baptist church in his ruling

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP, N.J. (BP) — A federal judge's ruling that a New Jersey Islamic society faced unlawful religious discrimination made special note that local Baptists were treated "differently and better" under similar circumstances.

The ruling came in a case that stirred discussion among Southern Baptists last year when the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and the International Mission Board joined a friend of the court brief advocating religious liberty for the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge, N.J. (ISBR).

Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President Frank S. Page clarified amid controversy at the time and again Jan. 6 that Cooperative Program funds have not been, and will not be, used to fund construction of mosques.

U.S. District Judge Michael Shipp, an appointee of U.S. President Barack Obama, ruled Dec. 31 that the Planning Board of Bernards Township, N.J., violated federal law when it required ISBR to include more than twice as much parking in its site plan for a proposed mosque as it required for local Christian and Jewish houses of worship.

The parking ordinance at issue requires "churches, a term that Shipp ruled includes Jewish, Islamic, and Christian congregations, to construct one parking space for every three seats in a proposed house of worship. Yet the Planning Board required ISBR's plan for a 150-person mosque to include 107 parking spaces. The board cited a report suggesting mosques may require more parking than religious gathering places of other faiths.

Township planners argued because peak Muslim worship time is Friday afternoon, attendees would likely come from work in separate cars rather than as families, the N.J. news website reported.

The ISBR revised its plans to include the requisite 107 parking spaces but did not file a final site plan including the revision, Shipp stated. The society's submitted site plan was rejected in January 2016, prompting a lawsuit.

Shipp's opinion states Basking Ridge's Millington Church, which is Baptist but not Southern Baptist, was "treated... differently and better" than the Islamic society. The 57-page opinion noted the cases of two Jewish synagogues as well but mentioned Millington by name 22 times.

"In or around 1998," Millington applied for permission to

construct a 1,200-seat worship center with 403 parking spaces — approximately a 3-to-1 ratio — and was granted approval in October 2000, Shipp stated.

Around 2007, Millington was granted approval to build a youth and family ministry building with less than half of the parking spaces required by local ordinance, provided the congregation offered additional off-site parking with shuttle service.

While Millington's most recent site plan was approved after four public hearings, ISBR's proposal resulted in 39 public hearings, which Shipp said is "more than the Planning Board held for any previous applicant."

Bernards Township argued the heightened requirement for the Islamic society was issued as a practical necessity rather than a form of religious discrimination.

Shipp ruled the township's intent was irrelevant. Discrimination occurred, he wrote, because the Planning Board "interpreted the Parking Ordinance to expressly distinguish treatment of Christian churches from Muslim mosques."

Shipp acknowledged the friend of the court brief joined by ERLC and IMB, stating it "supports" ISBR's arguments that unlawful religious discrimination occurred.

At the June 2016 SBC annual meeting in St. Louis, the brief was the subject of a messenger motion requesting that the SBC "withdraw" its friend of the court brief. The motion was ruled out of order because ERLC and IMB joined the brief, not the SBC.

The case name is *The Islamic Society of Basking Ridge, et al., v. Township of Bernards, et al.*

In the opening days of 2017, the young genius who gave us the social media phenomenon called Facebook made an unusual announcement to the world. This brilliant young guy, who is just over thirty years of age, who is the primary creator of Facebook and in turn has become a multi-multi-billionaire, announced that in 2017 he was going to visit all fifty states of the U. S. of A. Speculation is that he is laying the foundation for a political run for some office, maybe president of the United States. He wants to meet and talk with people in every state in our country. Well, well. The man who has tried to convince us that virtual realities and virtual relationships are as vital as face-to-face relationships wants to meet some real people. Welcome to God's real world: Mr. Zuckerberg. You will find it is a wonderful place filled with incredible and ever-interesting people.

The social media that have connected the whole world and billions of people on Facebook has also created some highlights of the problems that people have with each other that are found whether in reality or a virtual reality. I am confident that his travels will probably put him in touch with some folks who have personalities he has not encountered before and interesting views of which he may not be aware. It is interesting that he wants to make this tour because in only a few weeks we will begin a multi-month trip in and around and over Mississippi, connecting with people in every county and every county seat, in every corner and on hundreds of trails across our great state.



Welcome to Our World

We have designated these gatherings as Tell rallies. You may have seen the logo that has been used over and over for months now that says, "Tell Me, Tell Someone," what Jesus has done for you. The Tell Me, Tell Someone rallies are an effort to encourage all of God's people to be available to our Lord, to be willing to share what Christ has done for you in your life. The Tell Me portion is to encourage people to ask God the very question that Saul of Tarsus asked on the Damascus Road: "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22:10) Every person - young, old, single, married, rich, poor - everyone who knows Jesus has a story to tell and someone who needs to hear from you.

The Tell Someone part is the connector between those who know Christ and have experienced His love and those who need

to hear of Jesus' love. If you are a believer, I am confident there is someone in the circle of your immediate influence with whom you could share the Lord. There is a way you can connect in love and compassion to share Christ with them. That is the focus of these rallies, and you and all of your church family are invited to attend one or as many as you are able to attend.

There will be over 100 of these rallies across Mississippi, and no two of them will be alike. The story of the Good News will always be at the center - Jesus gave His life so we can have life - but the people, the faces, the places, the sounds, the songs, and even the shape of the sermon will be different time and time again. The Good News of Jesus is told beautifully and continually across our state in sermons and songs in sharing and caring,

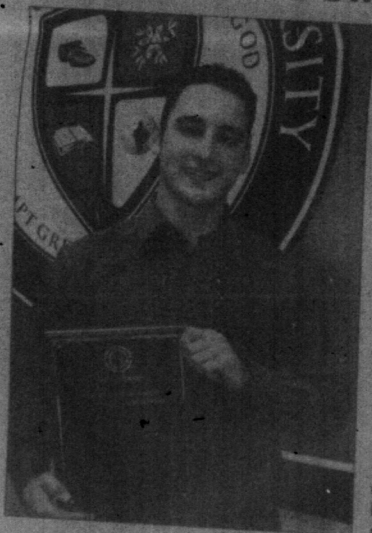
but this is an opportunity for all of us to gather and be reminded that we are not just church attenders but God's designated Good News bearers.

We will join together in each of these gatherings to be reminded, revitalized, and reenergized to do what God has called us to do to the maximum of our effort and ability in 2017. If you possibly can, make plans to attend. An even better plan would be to make an effort to bring someone with you who does not know Christ. Underscoring whatever plans God has for your life to be a part, would you please day after day join together praying for these rallies as they take place across Mississippi? Your prayers are powerful. We will be sharing the Good News of Christ not only in every county in our state, but we have also been invited to bring the Tell Me gatherings to the prisons of Mississippi. Along with encouraging our churches, we will have the opportunity to carry the Good News into the places many of which do not hear the Good News very often.

You - your prayers, support, and attendance where you can - will make a difference in the success or failure of the impact of each one of the rallies. Thank you for all the efforts that have been made and the preparation that has taken place over several years for this to occur. The time has come. Let us hold this effort up before God that it might be anointed by Him. Without Him, we can do nothing.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

College News



WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY senior Angelo Morales is the 2016 recipient of the Hub Award Leadership Scholarship. He was recognized during the 39th annual Hub Award dinner on Nov. 15 at Lake Terrace Convention Center in Hattiesburg. Morales is a nursing and intercultural studies major who has devoted the past several years to making a difference. He has been active on Carey's campus and in the community. His activities on campus include serving as associate justice for the Student Government Association, serving as the representative for Level 1 students in the Student Nurses Association, membership in the Alpha Chi National Honor Society and Carey Connection. Morales also participated in the WCU Baptist Student Union activities. For the past six years, Morales has been giving back to his community by helping to rebuild homes and community life in the Mississippi Gulf Coast area. Throughout his involvement, he has had a role in rebuilding 40 homes. Each year a Hub scholarship is awarded to a WCU and USM student who has demonstrated leadership and community service. Since its founding in 1979, the Hub Award has generated scholarship funds totaling over a half million dollars.

In other College News:

➤ Music lovers are invited to see some of the region's finest musicians perform one of the best works of Mozart at **Mississippi College**. The January 20 program is part of the Selater Chamber Music Series names in honor of award-winning composer James Selater. Composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in 1787, *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* is the title of the classical piece that translates into *Little Serenade*. The Friday concert at the Jean Pittman Williams Recital Hall in the Aven Fine Arts Building on the Clinton campus begins at 7:30 p.m. Concert tickets are \$20 for adults and \$5 for students from any school. Tickets can be purchased online at mc.edu/marketplace.

➤ Career Day at **Mississippi College** is set for February 14, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Recruiters from schools, the U.S. Navy, banks and dozens of other employers will be present. MC Office of Career Services co-director Jim Miller anticipates as many as 85 employers from Mississippi and beyond will attend along with hundreds of students. For more information on employers coming, visit <http://www.mc.edu/career/events/> or call the Office of Career Services at (601) 925-3901.

MS POSITIONS

NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, 6673 HWY 145 MERIDIAN MS, IS AN ACTIVELY GROWING CHURCH. We're prayerfully seeking a bi-vocational youth minister to engage and be passionate about our youth. Please email resume to newhopeyouthministersearch@gmail.com.

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

January 12, 2017

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.



The Mississippi Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra is an auditioned and interviewed group of 9th - 12th graders who are actively involved in the music ministry of a Southern Baptist church in Mississippi.

Contact Music Dept. for more information at cwtaylor@mbcb.org, or susanel@bellsouth.net
601-292-3267 | www.mbcb.org

Beginning Ringers Festival

Feb. 25 - Wynndale BC, Terry

Mississippi Singing Churchmen in concert:

Monday, February 27 - 7pm
FBC, Columbia, MS

Tuesday, February 28 - Noon
Main Street Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, MS

Tuesday, February 28 - 7pm
FBC, Magee

Visit www.mbcb.org or call Church Music at
1-800-748-1651, ext. 267.

MBASYC&O CONCERT & TOUR DATES

Wednesday, June 14, 2017
First Baptist Church, 6:30 P.M.
400 Elm St.
Richton, MS 39476
(601) 788-9607

Thursday, June 15, 2017
First Baptist Church, 6:30 P.M.
300 N Cleveland Ave.
Long Beach, MS 39560
(228) 864-2584

Friday, June 16, 2017
First Baptist Church, 6:30 P.M.
1108 Robb St.
Summit, MS 39666
(601) 248-6268

Saturday, June 17, 2017
Highland Colony Baptist Church, 6:00 P.M.
1200 Highland Colony Pkwy
Ridgeland MS 39157
(601) 856-4031

Sunday, June 18, 2017
First Baptist Church, 11:00 A.M.
402 N Van Buren St
Carthage, MS 39051
(601) 267-4583

First Baptist Church, 6:00 P.M.
303 1st Ave.
Amory, MS 38821
(662) 256-7131

Monday, June 19, 2017
First Baptist Church, 6:30 P.M.
431 North State Street
Jackson, MS 39201
(601) 949-1900

Mississippi Baptist Symphony Orchestra Retreat

January 13-14

Madison Central High School

Visit mbcb.org/mississippi-baptist-symphony-orchestra for registration & info.

Church Music Department | 601-292-3267

Small Church Youth Ministry Workshops

Workshops begin with supper at 6:00 p.m. and end at 8:45.

Tuesday, Jan. 17, 2017 Trinity Baptist Church
Waynesboro MS

Thursday, Jan. 19, 2017 East Mississippi Community College,
Scooba MS

These workshops will provide youth ministry training and an opportunity to discuss youth ministry as it relates to the smaller churches and churches that don't employ a full-time paid youth minister. A light supper will also be served to all participants.

For more dates and to register, visit:
mbcb.org/part-time-voluntary-youth-ministers-workshop
Discipleship/Family Ministry Dept - 601-292-3203

2017 STATE SENIOR ADULT EVANGELISM RALLY

"WHO'S WALKING IN MY STEPS"

"TO THIS YOU WERE CALLED, BECAUSE CHRIST SUFFERED FOR YOU, LEAVING YOU AN EXAMPLE, THAT YOU SHOULD FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS." - 1 PETER 2:21

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2017
NORTHCREST BAPTIST CHURCH, MERIDIAN, MS

- 8:00 REGISTRATION/REFRESHMENT**
- 8:30 GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND WELCOME**
DAN LANIER GREG MASSEY LLOYD LUNCEFORD
- 9:00 RICKY YOUNG**
- 9:20 JERRY MIXON**
- 9:40 BREAK**
- 10:03 DANIEL HALL**
- 10:23 ADULT CHOIR, FBC NEWTON, MS**
- 10:50 SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER: DAVID HAMILTON**
- 11:25 RICKY YOUNG: "FIND US FAITHFUL"**
- 11:45 ADJOURN: MARCUS PEABLER**

DISCIPLESHIP/FAMILY MINISTRY

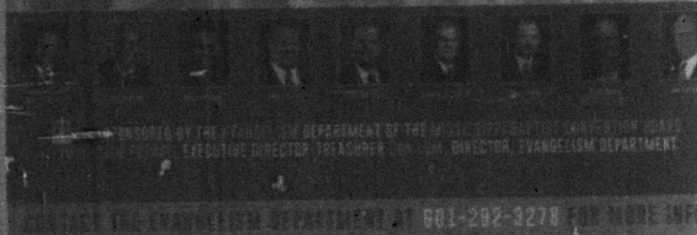
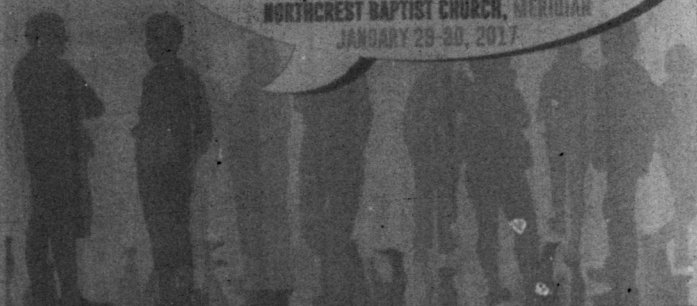
601-292-3284

TELL SOMEONE

what Jesus has done for you!

2017 STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

NORTHCREST BAPTIST CHURCH, MERIDIAN
JANUARY 29-30, 2017



Looking for a resolution you can keep?

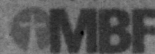
January is

"Make Your Will" month

The Mississippi Baptist Foundation can help you make 2017 the year you follow through.

Call 601.292.3210

or visit us on the Web at
msbaptistfoundation.org



MISSION >> POSSIBLE

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST MINISTRY ASSISTANTS CONFERENCE
GARAYWA CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER APRIL 10-11, 2017

CONTACT THE PASTOR/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DEPT. AT
601-292-3305 OR VCLARY@MBCB.ORG FOR MORE INFO.

Visit mbcb.org/witnessing-through-media or contact
Communication Services at 601-292-3378 for info.

Pray this day for...

January 12 - January 25, 2017

"praying at all times in the Spirit... To that end keep alert with perseverance, making supplication for all the saints..."

Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)

Pray for: **Eugenia & Tracy Putnam**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **John & Deborah Royals**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through regional office support, church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Jonathan & Bethany Sharp**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting & community outreach encounter.

Pray for: **George & Geraldine Smith**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Thomas & Jenna Smith**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church planting & regional office support.

Pray for: **Stephen & Svetlana Parish**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Kevin & Brenda Peacock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through theological education, outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Floyd & Sylvia Wingo**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Charles & Shannon Worthly**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through community outreach & encounter.

Pray for: **James & Mary Adair**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Bethany Allen**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through community outreach encounter.

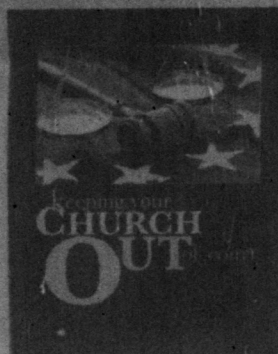
Pray for: **Richard & Martha Seal**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through financial administration, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Keep Your Church Out of Court!

Michael Lee, Pastor/Leadership Development Department director, is available to dialogue about legal issues or to lead meetings or conferences on site.

To purchase a notebook(s) for you or your church, please contact Vesta Clary in the Pastor/Leadership Development Department at vclary@mbcb.org or 601-292-3305.

Cost of notebook is \$10



It's 2017! time to **APPLY** for scholarships from The Mississippi Baptist Foundation

get more details and complete the application at www.msbfoundation.org before May 31

call us at (601.292.3210) for more information



Miss R. R. - 3/2/09
Parents: J & K
Restricted

Miss Carley - 3/2/15
Parents: C & A
Restricted

Parents: Aaron & Tiffany
America Peoples

Mr. Blake - 3/7/07
Parents: J & M
Restricted

Miss RG - 3/10/04
Parents: J & H
European Peoples

Miss Emma Worthy - 3/28/03
Parents: Charlie & Shannon Worthy
European Peoples

Encourage an MK with a card! To Be Sent JANUARY 26, 2017, by the WMU Office



PLEASE NOTE THE TIMING: Thank you for your love and support of MKs by sending Birthday cards! Because of the sending to other countries, there is a need to get cards sent a month ahead of birthday. As soon as the list is in the Baptist Record, please send the cards and not wait until a couple of weeks before the date of the birthday. It is posted two months ahead to give time to receive cards and then to mail them a month ahead of time to insure arrival around birthday. Again, thank you for being a blessing to so many with this ministry!

NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU. Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a package to MS WMU.

FOR SECURITY: cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: MBCE WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.

Please include your return address on each card envelope. MKs and their parents may wish to send you an update or note of appreciation.

HOUSE TOPS

Just for the Record



NEW HOPE CHURCH, FOXWORTH, recognized those with perfect Sunday School attendance for the 2015-16 church year. Shown are B.B. Stringer, seated, 61 years; and, from left, pastor Tim Parker, Jimmy Thomas—47 years, Dillion Smith—11 years, and Sherrell Magee—35 years.



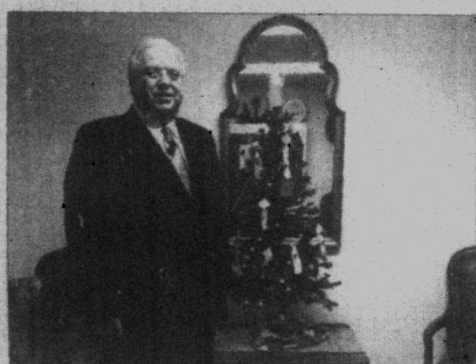
TUSCUMBIA CHURCH, BOONEVILLE, ordained Scotty Church and Corey Lambert as deacons Jan. 8. Shown are Nikki Lambert, Lambert, pastor Ben Parman, Church, and Kristy Church.



CLEAR BRANCH CHURCH, WESSON, thanks Gerald Burke for 58 years of service as church treasurer and Scott Burke for 27 years as church secretary.



TOOMSUA CHURCH, TOOMSUA, held a baby dedication Jan. 1, led by pastor Steven Wade. Shown are Josh and Melissa Reid with Jaxon Mavis Reid.



FRIENDSHIP CHURCH, ABERDEEN, went over their Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal Jan. 1. Pastor Rick Burton is shown with the tree, decorated with some candles made by the church's children.



YELLOW CREEK CHURCH, LOUISVILLE, presented the Christmas program W-KING Radio Dec. 19. Anna Bolding, children and youth director; Stanley Magill, pastor.



The adult choir of **BEULAH CHURCH, DECATUR**, presented the Christmas cantata, Come Let Us Adore, Dec. 18. Luke Howell, music minister; Gary Rivers, pastor.



The children and youth of **GRACE CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, held their Christmas program about the Nativity.



The children of **BASSFIELD CHURCH, BASSFIELD**, won first place in the Bassfield Christmas parade Dec. 10. The name of their float was Buzzing Around Christmas.

CONGRESS

cont. from p. 1

represent more diversity in religion, Pew said.

Most non-Christian members of Congress are Jewish Democrats, who comprise nearly 12% of the party's Congressional members. Among the 242 Democrats, 42% are Protestant, 37% are Catholic, and the remaining 21% are composed of Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Unitarian Universalist, and religiously unidentified members.

Of the 293 Republicans in Congress, the two non-Christians are Jewish.

The religious composition of the 115th Congress is largely unchanged from the previously convened body, as only 62 new members joined 473 incumbents. Among newly elected members, half are Protestant and roughly a third a Catholic. The 13% of new members who are non-Christian is double the share of non-Christian incumbents, Pew said.

The newest body has six fewer Christians (485) than the 114th Congress (491), Pew said. The are seven fewer Protestants (299 compared to 306) and seven fewer Baptists (72 compared to 79).

The members of Mississippi's congressional delegation all list Christian affiliations:

■ Sen. Thad Cochran: Southern Baptist.

■ Sen. Roger Wicker: Southern Baptist.

■ First District Rep. Trent Kelly: United Methodist.

■ Second District Rep. Benjie Thompson: Methodist.

■ Third District Rep. Gregg Harper: Southern Baptist.

■ Fourth District Rep. Steven Palazzo: Roman Catholic.

The full report is available at pewforum.org.

OBITUARIES

Gary Harthcock, 97, a Clarksdale native and longtime worker and volunteer for the International Mission Board



HARTHCOCK

IMB of the Southern Baptist Convention, died Jan. 5 in Thailand of an abdominal aortic aneurysm. He and his wife Evelyn, who passed away in September 2015, were married 69 years and served together overseas for 40 years in six countries. Gary Harthcock was born in Clarksdale on July 7, 1919. He served as a patrol plane commander in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He held a bachelor's degree in agriculture from Ohio State University in Columbus, and started a business building greenhouses. He eventually joined the staff of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and later served as director of Fruitland Bible Institute in Hendersonville, N.C. The Harthcocks began serving with IMB on the island of Antigua in the Caribbean when he was age 56, developing irrigation systems and using agriculture to minister to the people. Although they officially retired in 1985, they continued to work alongside IMB in Liberia, Mongolia, Guyana, Cambodia, and Thailand. Gary Harthcock is survived by his sister Margaret Varnell of Cleveland, TN; his brother Thomas B. Harthcock Sr. of Newton; and foster daughter Carmen Fitzsimons of Summerville, S.C. His memorial service was held Jan. 14 at Chiang Mai Ram Hospital in Chiang Mai, Thailand. (Baptist Press)

Paul Powell, 83, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annuity Board, now known as GuideStone Fi-



POWELL

resources in Dallas, died Dec. 28 following a stroke suffered earlier in the month. In addition to leading the Annuity Board from 1990-97, Powell pastored Green Acres Church in Tyler, Texas, for 17 years; served as president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in the mid-1980s; chaired Baylor University's board of regents; and became dean of Baylor's Truett Theological Seminary in 2001. Upon his retirement from the Annuity Board, the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville adopted a resolution noting Powell "provided excellent leadership, effectively sharpening the focus of Southern Baptist pastors on proper stewardship in preparing for retirement." Powell also "effectively educated the Southern Baptist family concerning its responsibility for the care and provision for their pastors," the resolution stated. Powell received a bachelor of arts degree from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, a master of divinity from Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, and honorary doctorates from four Baptist institutions. He was a pastor for a total of 34 years and author of more than 50 books. Powell is survived by his wife of 62 years, Cathy; his children Mike and Lori; and three grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son Kent as well as his parents Jodie and Mary. Funeral services were held Jan. 2 at Green Acres Church.

BIBL i O C I P H E R

CBMG RGGS CRGFGIVFG DPCV

WVDFAGNHGA, BPS CV BNN CRG INVM,

VHGF CRG ZRKER CRG RVNW YRVAC

RBCR OMSG WVD VHGFAGGFA, CV IGGS

CRG ERDFER VI YVS, ZRKER RG RBCR

UDFERBAGS ZKCR RKA VZP TNVVS.

BECA CZGPCW: CZGPCW-GKYRC

Clue: W = Y

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 21:25

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newspaper are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530, FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

Value All • Proverbs 24:11-12; Mark 10:46-49

Cain asked God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9, NASB). While God was confronting Cain about killing his brother Abel, I believe the Bible bears witness to the fact that we are to be our "brother's" keeper and reach out to others. Why? Because Jesus values all people. In Proverbs 24, Solomon addresses the need to stand up for others.

A Call to Protect Life – Proverbs 24:11

Solomon challenged his readers to rescue people wrongly condemned to death. He said, "Deliver those who are being taken away to death, and those who are staggering to slaughter, Oh hold them back" (v. 11). He was encouraging them to stand up for those who could not stand up for themselves. Other Bible authors agreed. Asaph challenged his readers to do the same. He wrote, "Rescue the weak and the needy, deliver them out of the hand of the wicked" (Psalm 82:4). The prophet Micah proclaimed, "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). He stated that doing justice was a requirement. Solomon, Asaph, and Micah exclaimed the importance of being involved in the lives of others. Also speaking of the afflicted, the Lord said, "For I, the Lord, love justice" (Isaiah 61:8).

A Warning Against Inaction – Proverbs 24:10, 12

Solomon issued a warning against failing to act and addressed the excuses of ignorance and pious avoidance. In verse 10, Solomon wrote, "If you are slack in the day of distress, your strength is limited" (NASB). Other translations of this verse are similar. The NIV version reads, "If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength!" In the NKJV we read, "If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small." Slack, falter, and faint all indicate a lack of action. The lack of action shows weakness or lack of strength.

In verse 12, Solomon warned his people that excuses of ignorance and pious avoidance will not protect them from punishment. "If you say, 'See, we did not know this,' does He not consider it who weighs the hearts? And does He not know it who keeps your soul? And will He not render to man according to his work?" Ignorance is no excuse. Neither

is the pious thought that we are above helping others. God's Word commands us to be our brother's keeper.

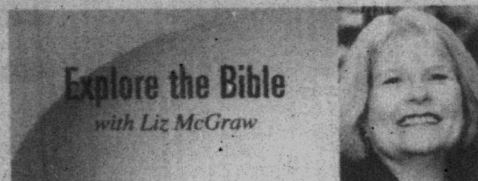
Jesus also warned against inaction. In Luke 10, Jesus gave instruction to seventy of his followers before sending them out. He told them to go into a city and if the people accepted them, the followers were to heal the sick and proclaim the kingdom of God. However, there were serious consequences if the people did not accept them. Jesus warned, "I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city" (Luke 10:8-12). Solomon and Jesus warned

maeus, giving him His attention. With the triumphal entry and in Jerusalem laying before him, He stopped to take care of the blind beggar. Jesus provided a wonderful example of helping someone who could not help himself. Jesus was fulfilling His calling prophesied by Isaiah and quoted in Luke 4:18. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners..." (Isaiah 61:1). We are called to be like Jesus.

God expects us to be advocates on behalf of others because all lives matter. The Lord values life from the womb to the tomb. God's standards call for a balanced kingdom agenda, as we commit to protecting the unborn, the born, the living and the dying.

In the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus said, "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same" (Luke 10: 36-37).

McGraw is development director of Crossroads SW Counseling Center, a conference speaker, life coach, and member of Woodville Church.



Explore the Bible
with Liz McGraw

against inaction and explained the dire consequences for inaction.

An Example Set – Mark 10:46-49

Jesus was leaving Jericho and had drawn a large crowd. Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, called out to Jesus but the crowd attempted to silence him. Jesus directed them to summon Barti-

Created for a Purpose • Jeremiah 1:4-10

God spoke to Jeremiah as a young man and Jeremiah knew God's message was real and full of meaning for his life and those around him in very trying times. Jeremiah said it this way, "The word of the LORD came to me: Jeremiah 1:4 (HCSB). The "LORD" in this verse and in all of Jeremiah's writing refers to Yahweh God, the creator and ruler of the universe. "LORD" is used by Jeremiah and other Jewish writers to show respect for God's proper name. They are taking every precaution not to violate the third commandment, "Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God..." Exodus 20:7.

Understanding Jeremiah's deep personal respect for God helps us understand the great significance when Jeremiah says that the LORD spoke to him. Let's look at what his Lord said to him. "I chose you before I formed you in the womb; I set you apart before you were born. I appointed you a prophet to the nations." This one sentence where Yahweh God (the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) spoke first to the Old Testament Prophet, Jeremiah, is packed with meaning.

First, God said "I chose you." God took the initiative to act in a way only He could and "chose," planned, to bless and use this young man in a very special way.

It is of no small import that God chose to clearly tell Jeremiah about the special unique plan He had for him. It is an act of great love and respect when the Ruler of the Universe shows us His plan for our life. But the meaning of what is being reported here only grows when God says "I chose you before I formed you in the womb."

Before any human knowledge that there would even be a little boy named Jeremiah, God says He had a specific purpose for this baby. Think about what that tells us about the depth God's purposeful love for us. In our 21st Century America, we can look at sonograms and tell all kinds of exciting things about babies. We can almost always tell if God is knitting us a son or a daughter. Even more often, we can tell if there is more than one baby. Very early we can watch the baby's living heart beat and listen to it, too. We can see little fingers and toes and noses. As far as I know, we

still can't tell the color of the baby's hair from a sonogram.

As limited human beings, we can't tell our son or daughter's personality, likes and dislikes, or strengths and weakness. But God can know all these things and much more. This allows Him to have a perfect plan for each of His created children.

Later in the book of Jeremiah God says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future," Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV).

God wants to give us "hope and a future" because He loves us. He loves us in part because He personally "formed" us in our mother's womb. Psalm 139:13-16 gives more insight into God's lovingly forming us in the womb. "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and

wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ... all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

If we kill a baby in the womb, we are in direct rebellion against God and His "ordained" plan. Herod flew into a rage and opposed God's plan for Jesus. Herod intended to kill the baby Jesus. Check out Matthew 2:16 and following. Can you imagine anyone or any idea meaner than killing every baby boy 2 years old or younger? Hundreds of years before in Egypt the Pharaoh, just like Herod became scared of losing his throne, and killed all the little boys two and under. Moses' mother and sister floated him in a papyrus basket in the Nile River, and God rescued him from the evil pharaoh. The details of this story are in the first two chapters of Exodus.

January 22, 1973 a majority of the Justices on the United States Supreme Court ruled in Roe v Wade that it is okay to fight God's will and murder babies in the womb as God gives them life and knits them together.

Hicks is associational missions director for Jasper Association in Dry Springs.



Bible Studies for Life
with Don Hicks

MANDATE

cont. from p. 1

organization — criticized O'Connor's decision.

The ruling "puts thousands of people at risk of marginal-

ization, harassment, and discrimination at a time they are most vulnerable and in need of inclusive, respectful care," HRC Legal Director Sarah Warbelow said in a written release. "While Judge O'Connor's action is unconscionable, we

believe that justice will prevail as courts continue to recognize that discrimination on the basis of sex is illegal, including discrimination on the basis of gender identity."

Meanwhile, a California inmate convicted of murder, kid-

napping, and robbery for ransom has been approved by that state's Department of Corrections for "medically necessary" sex-reassignment surgery, according to news reports. Shiloh Heavenly Quine, 57, will be the first state prisoner in the coun-

try to undergo a sex change at taxpayer expense.

Convicted spy Chelsea Manning was previously approved by the U.S. Army for sex reassignment at federal taxpayer expense while in custody at the Ft. Leavenworth federal prison in Kansas.

Americans not big on current crop of leaders

NASHVILLE (BP) — America has its problems and needs to talk but according to a new survey by LifeWay Research, few Americans agree on who can best lead a conversation about the nation's woes.

Twenty-three percent would turn to the office of the U.S. president. About one in 10 would turn to the nation's preachers or to college professors respectively, the survey shows.

"Almost no one would ask a musician or pro athlete, even though they often try to start public conversations," said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

"Musicians or athletes get a great deal of attention for their public statements about the issues," McConnell acknowledged, "but few Americans seem to look to them as thought leaders."

Before last November's presidential election, LifeWay Research asked a representative sample of 1,000 Americans this question: "In America today, who is in the best position to generate a healthy conversation on challenges facing our society?"

Among possible responses were "our elected president," preachers, and pro athletes. As noted earlier, among the top answers were the office of the president, pastors of local churches, and university professors.

Members of the news media at eight percent fared slightly better than business leaders at seven percent and members of Congress at six percent. Few Americans look to professional athletes (one percent) or musicians (less than one percent) to lead healthy conversations about the nation's challenges.

The most common response, however, was, "None of these" at 33%. Among other findings:

■ Southerners are more likely to look to the president (25%) than those in the Midwest (18%).

■ Those in the Northeast choose the news media (11%) more than those in the South (five percent).

■ Younger Americans — those ages 18 to 34 — look to the news media (12%) more than those 65 and older (three percent).

■ African Americans are the most likely ethnic group to choose local pastors (21%) and the president (37%).

■ Hispanic Americans are the least likely ethnic group to choose the media (three percent).

■ Christians are more likely to look to pastors (16%) than

"There's a vacuum of public leadership in America. We know we have problems and that we should talk about them, but there's no one who can bring us all together."

Scott McConnell

executive director of LifeWay Research

those from other faiths (one percent) or Nones (two percent). Nones are those with no religious preference.

■ Christians (seven percent) are less likely to look to college professors than those from other faiths (18%) or Nones (15%).

■ Americans with evangelical beliefs have faith in pastors (36%) but little faith in the media (three percent) and professors (three percent) to

guide such conversations.

Overall, the survey reflects the reality that Americans are fractured and divided, McConnell said, adding that few leaders can draw a wide, diverse audience.

"There's a vacuum of public leadership in America," he observed. "We know we have problems and that we should talk about them, but there's no one who can bring us all together."

Among Americans:

In America today, who is in the best position to generate a healthy conversation on the challenges facing our society?




Note: Does not equal 100% due to rounding.

First Baptist Madison

Women's Winter Weekend

with Anna Country

Hosted by: Debbie Venable



Mothering and Mentoring: From Toddlers to Teens
Friday, February 3
6:30pm
One Session
\$10 per person

When Mercy Meets Your Mess
Saturday, February 4
9:00am
Doors at 8:00am
Two Sessions
\$20 per person

Weekend Price: \$35
Includes all 3 Sessions!


For More Information
First Baptist Madison.org / Women Ministry

MID SOUTH MEN'S BIBLE CONFERENCE


February 24-25, 2017

Faith Baptist Church
Bartlett, Tennessee


Doors open at 5:00pm for check-in on Friday
Conference begins at 6:00pm




Jeff Crook
Pastor
Blackshear Place Baptist Church
Buford, Georgia



Herb Reavis, Jr.
Pastor
North Jacksonville Baptist Church
Jacksonville, Florida



Brett Pitman
Pastor
Highland Park Baptist Church
Muscle Shoals, Alabama



Faith Celebration Choir & Orchestra
Led by Terry Easley
Associate Pastor, Music & Worship
Faith Baptist Church, Bartlett, Tennessee

Go to myfaithbaptist.org to register online.